

Claims

- [c1] A computer-assisted method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, comprising:
receiving a user selection of a topic from a plurality of predefined topics;
receiving a user indication of a geographic locale;
providing an indication, of one chapter of a plurality of chapters, based on the topic and the geographic locale, wherein the chapters have respective members; and
automatically scheduling an in-person gathering for the chapter at one venue of a plurality of venues associated with the locale.
- [c2] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the scheduling of the in-person gathering comprises selecting the venue based on a characteristic of the topic.
- [c3] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the scheduling of the in-person gathering comprises selecting the venue based on an input from a member of the chapter.

- [c4] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 3, wherein the input comprises votes from ones of the respective members of the chapter indicated as planning to attend the in-person gathering, and the selection of the venue is based on a majority of the votes.
- [c5] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 4, wherein, when the number of votes from the ones of the respective members of the chapter indicated as planning to attend the gathering exceeds a venue attendance threshold, more than one venue for the gathering is automatically selected.
- [c6] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 3, wherein the input comprises a venue indication from an organizing member of the respective members of the chapter.
- [c7] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising receiving attendance plan indications, from ones of the respective members of the chapter, indicating a plan to attend the in-person gathering.
- [c8] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of

topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 7, further comprising automatically canceling the in-person gathering when the number of received attendance plan indications does not exceed a predetermined attendance threshold.

[c9] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 8, wherein the predetermined attendance threshold is set by an organizing member of the respective members of the chapter.

[c10] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising sending a reminder to the respective members of the chapter after the scheduling of the in-person gathering and before the in-person gathering.

[c11] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 10, wherein the reminder is sent only to ones of the respective members of the chapter indicated as planning to attend the in-person gathering.

[c12] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising sending a feedback request, related to the

in-person gathering, to the respective members of the chapter indicated before the in-person gathering as planning to attend, after the in-person gathering.

[c13] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 12, wherein the feedback request is adapted to obtain quantitative information regarding an actual number of attendees of the in-person gathering.

[c14] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 13, wherein the feedback request is adapted to obtain qualitative information regarding the in-person gathering.

[c15] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising providing a user with a capability to search the plurality of predetermined topics using a keyword.

[c16] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising providing a user with a capability to display the plurality of predetermined topics in a hierarchical manner.

[c17] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the indication of the chapter is provided to a user in response to the user selection of the topic and the user indication of the geographic locale.

- [c18] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the user receiving the indication of the chapter is indicated as one of the respective members of the chapter.
- [c19] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein, for ones of the plurality of predetermined topics having a plurality of associated ones of the plurality of chapters, the automatic scheduling of respective in-person gatherings for associated ones of the plurality of chapters is performed so each of the respective in-person gatherings has an identical calendar date.
- [c20] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 19, wherein each of the respective in-person gatherings has an identical time.
- [c21] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the automatic scheduling of the in-person gathering is performed on a periodic basis.

- [c22] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the plurality of venues is a predetermined plurality of venues.
- [c23] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein, when no chapter corresponding to the topic exists in the geographic locale, an organizer volunteer indication of a user, with respect to organizing a new chapter corresponding to the topic in the geographic locale, is accepted.
- [c24] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the providing of the indication of the chapter comprises: providing the indication of an existing one of the chapters based on the topic and the geographic locale, and when no existing chapter can be identified, automatically creating a new chapter relating to the topic and the geographic locale and providing the indication with respect to the new chapter.
- [c25] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising accepting a request to automatically send a

user a notification of the creation of a new chapter relating to the geographic locale and the topic.

- [c26] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the user indication of a geographic locale comprises one of a postal code and a city name.
- [c27] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the user indication of a geographic locale comprises latitude and longitude related information.
- [c28] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 27, wherein the providing of the indication of the one chapter is performed by a calculation involving the latitude and longitude related information.
- [c29] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising receiving an indication from one member of the respective members of the chapter that the one member is a hosting member for the in-person gathering.
- [c30] The method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, as set forth in claim 29, further

comprising automatically generating for the hosting member one of a sign, a banner, and a nametag for the in-person gathering.

[c31] A computer system for carrying out a computer-assisted method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, comprising a processor, and memory, under control of the processor, including software instructions for performing a method according to any one of claims 1–30.

[c32] A computer program product for enabling a computer system to carry out a computer-assisted method for organizing in-person gatherings of topic-related interest, comprising software instructions for the computer system, and a computer readable medium including the software instructions, wherein the software instructions define operations for performing a method according to any one of claims 1–30.